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Letter dated 13 March 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you in my capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It has been a practice of the Security Council, in particular with regard to various recent crises, to dispatch field missions to observe first-hand the situation on the ground in order to enhance knowledge about prevailing situations and issues and to display the concern of the Council in the matter and the priority is ascribes to addressing and appropriately resolving the matter. Such field missions are in line with the Council's main responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations, namely the maintenance of international peace and security, for they are a means for the Council to be proactive in this regard and they should be promoted.

We believe that one such situation calling for a Security Council mission is the situation in the Middle East, in particular the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. A field mission by Security Council members to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular at this critical time, would help to improve the Council's image as well as its credibility at a time when a common perception in the region is that the Council has repeatedly failed to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of peace and security in the Middle East region and in particular with regard to the question of Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In this connection, such a visit by the Council would also be in line with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is satisfactorily resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

We believe that such a Security Council mission would not overlap with the efforts of the Quartet regarding the Middle East, but on the contrary, would supplement those efforts and constructively and positively contribute to Middle East peace, to finding a sustainable solution to the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, and to the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council in this regard.

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The Non-Aligned Movement considers that a Security Council mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory would be particularly valuable at present, when the Palestinians have just averted internal turmoil as a result of the Mecca Agreement, which can help create a proper climate for the resumption of the peace process.

The Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is logical that the Council be proactive in pursuit of the implementation of its own resolutions, including by conducting field missions to the region in follow-up of its resolutions and for the purpose of gaining further knowledge about the core issues involved, which could enable the Council members to better address the matter.

The Council currently receives a monthly briefing from the Secretariat on the Palestinian situation, which is often given by the Secretary-General himself or his Special Representative, attesting to the priority given to the matter within the Council. In this connection, we refer particularly to Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, which was adopted by the Council after the provocation that was carried out at Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Occupied East Jerusalem on 28 September 2000. Paragraph 7 of this resolution invites the Secretary-General to continue to follow the situation and to keep the Council informed. A visit to the region by members of the Council themselves is long overdue. Such a visit would allow the Council members to see first-hand the situation they are briefed about monthly and would help to enhance understanding of the realities of the facts and the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

Clearly, the Council members conducting the field mission should strive to meet with both the Palestinian and Israeli sides during the mission. Such meetings with the parties in the region should be viewed as constructive initiatives, which could produce positive results and enhance the current dialogue on the question.

With regard to the recurrent issue of and calls for the need for the provision of protection for the Palestinian civilian population and the possible role of the Security Council in this matter, it is important to recall Council resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, which was adopted following the massacre committed against Palestinian worshippers in Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil (Hebron) on 25 February 1994 and by which the Council established the Temporary International Presence in Hebron to provide protection for the Palestinian civilian population in the city, which has been besieged and terrorized by the illegal Israeli settlers in the area.

The Non-Aligned Movement suggests that the appropriate timing for sending a field mission to the Middle East would be next June, that is, the end of the first semester of 2007.

The Non-Aligned Movement sincerely hopes that the Security Council will consider this proposal in a positive way.

The Movement reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and sovereignty in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

I should be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Rodrigo **Malmierca Díaz**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations
Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement